

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

**Summary on
Fifteenth Chapter
by
Swami Paramarthananda**

SUMMARY (FIFTEENTH CHAPTER)

- Note: 1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

[In the 13th and 14th chapters, the Lord dealt with the main theme of the *Gītā* — the essential oneness of *jīva* and *Īśvara*. Being a subtle topic, *Kṛṣṇa* discusses the same in this chapter also, in a different way.]

In the first two and a half verses, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a description of the vast and endless *saṃsāra* by comparing it with the mighty *aśvattha*-tree. Like this tree, this *saṃsāra* is vast, many-branched, well-rooted and not easily destructible. To add to this is its mysterious nature. (The *jīva* is caught in this *saṃsāra*, helplessly struggling to free itself.)

In the next two and a half verses (upto the 5th), *Bhagavān* talks about the means to get out of this *saṃsāra*. The first step is to develop detachment from this *saṃsāra* by recognising its binding nature. (As long as one has value for wordly pursuits, one's mind will not be available for seeking freedom.) Having withdrawn the mind from worldly desires, one should seek *Brahman*, the cause of everything (4). (Seeking *Brahman* is nothing but *jñānayoga* — vedantic enquiry under a *guru*.) Then, *Kṛṣṇa* highlights the qualifications necessary for this knowledge. Freedom from (reaction towards) the pairs of opposites, pride, delusion, and attachment as well as a commitment to vedantic enquiry are emphasized here (5).

In the 6th verse, the Lord talks about the nature of *Brahman*. It is not illumined by anything (because it is the self-effulgent consciousness which illumines everything). Attaining this *Brahman*, the supreme abode of the Lord, one does not return to *saṃsāra* again.

[In the following sections, *Kṛṣṇa* reveals that *Brahman* alone expresses in the form of *jīva* and *jagat* (universe). From this it becomes clear that reaching *Brahman* does not involve travel.]

SUMMARY

From the 7th to the 11th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* shows that the *jīva*, the consciousness in every being, is the Lord's (*Brahman's*) expression only (7). At the time of death, this *jīva* alone takes the mind and sense organs from one body to another body. (8). It is this *jīva* who experiences everything through the sense organs (9). Thus, the Lord alone is expressing in the form of the very life and its functions in every being (10). The pure-minded ones recognise this whereas the deluded ones do not (11).

From the 12th to the 15th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* shows how the *jagat* (the universe) also is an expression of the Lord (*Brahman*). The light in the sun, the moon, and the fire is the Lord only (12). In the form of the sunlight and moonlight, the Lord alone sustains all living beings (13). As the digestive fire, it is the Lord who digests the food (14). The Lord alone is behind all the mental faculties of knowledge, memory, etc. He is the author and the content of the *Vedas* as well as the knower of the *Vedas* (15).

(Thus, *Kṛṣṇa* reveals that *Brahman* alone is in the form of *jīva* and *jagat*. Hence reaching *Brahman* is in the form of understanding only — understanding that *Brahman* is never away from either oneself or the universe.)

In the next three verses, *Bhagavān* reveals *Brahman* in its true nature. *Brahman*, in the form of the manifest universe, is called *kṣarapuruṣa*. As the unmanifest universe (*māyā*), the same *Brahman* is called *akṣarapuruṣa* (16). Both these *puruṣas* are relative. Beyond these two *puruṣas* is the *uttamapuruṣa*, the absolute. Because of its superiority, it is called *paramātmā* or *puruṣottama*. It is the imperishable (attributeless) *Brahman* because of which everything exists (17, 18).

Concluding the teaching, *Kṛṣṇa* glorifies this knowledge as the means of fulfilment. With an undeluded mind, the one who knows this most secret knowledge of *puruṣottama*, becomes the knower of all and a person of fulfilment (19, 20).

SUMMARY

The main topics discussed in this chapter are:

1. Description of *samsāra*.....1 to 3
2. Means of liberation.....3 to 6
3. *Brahman* as *jīva*.....7 to 11
4. *Brahman* as *jagat*.....12 to 15
5. *Brahman* as *purusottama*.....16 to 18
6. Glory of *puruṣottama-jñānām*.....19, 20

Since the main topic of this chapter is *puruṣottama*, this chapter is called *Puruṣottama-yoga*.
